

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

De Clercq, Brants & Partners

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08 MAART 2004

From the
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

To:

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PCT

(Report
4.4.04)

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Rule 71.1)

Date of mailing
(day/month/year)

04.03.2004

Applicant's or agent's file reference
VIB-034-PCT

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

International application No.
PCT/EP 03/01229

International filing date (day/month/year)
07.02.2003

Priority date (day/month/year)
08.02.2002

Applicant

VLAAMS INTERUNIVERSITAIR INSTITUUT VOOR ... et al.

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

The applicant's attention is drawn to Article 33(5), which provides that the criteria of novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability described in Article 33(2) to (4) merely serve the purposes of international preliminary examination and that "any Contracting State may apply additional or different criteria for the purposes of deciding whether, in that State, the claimed inventions is patentable or not" (see also Article 27(5)). Such additional criteria may relate, for example, to exemptions from patentability, requirements for enabling disclosure, clarity and support for the claims.

Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:



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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference VIB-034-PCT		FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/EP 03/01229		International filing date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 07.02.2003	Priority date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 08.02.2002
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC C07K16/28, A61K39/395			
Applicant VLAAMS INTERUNIVERSITAIR INSTITUUT VOOR ... et al.			
<p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of sheets.</p>			
<p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <p>I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the opinion</p> <p>II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority</p> <p>III <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</p> <p>IV <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention</p> <p>V <input type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</p> <p>VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited</p> <p>VII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application</p> <p>VIII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application</p>			
Date of submission of the demand 01.09.2003		Date of completion of this report 04.03.2004	
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465		Authorized Officer Irion, A Telephone No. +49 89 2399-8174 	

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. **PCT/EP 03/01229**

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):

Description, Pages

1-23 as originally filed

Claims, Numbers

1-3 as originally filed

Sequence listing part of the description, pages:

1-9, as originally filed

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☒ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☒ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages:
- ☐ the claims, Nos.:
- ☐ the drawings, sheets:

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)).

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. **PCT/EP 03/01229**

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

III. Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability

1. The questions whether the claimed invention appears to be novel, to involve an inventive step (to be non-obvious), or to be industrially applicable have not been examined in respect of:

☐ the entire international application,

☒ claims Nos. 1-3 (N, IS, IA)

because:

☒ the said international application, or the said claims Nos. 3 (IA) relate to the following subject matter which does not require an international preliminary examination (specify):

see separate sheet

☒ the description, claims or drawings (*indicate particular elements below*) or said claims Nos. 3 (N, IS, IA) are so unclear that no meaningful opinion could be formed (*specify*):

see separate sheet

☒ the claims, or said claims Nos. 1-2 (N, IS, IA) are so inadequately supported by the description that no meaningful opinion could be formed.

☐ no international search report has been established for the said claims Nos.

2. A meaningful international preliminary examination cannot be carried out due to the failure of the nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence listing to comply with the standard provided for in Annex C of the Administrative Instructions:

☐ the written form has not been furnished or does not comply with the Standard.

☐ the computer readable form has not been furnished or does not comply with the Standard.

Item III

III.1 With respect to claims 1 and 2

Claims 1 and 2 do not meet the requirements of Article 5 and 6 PCT in that the matter for which protection is sought is not clearly defined. The claims attempt to define the subject-matter in terms of the result to be achieved, namely the inhibition of the expression and/or activity of prominin-1, which merely amounts to a statement of the underlying problem. Moreover, said claims are not supported by the description as required by Article 6 PCT, as their scope is broader than justified by the description.

Due to the severe objections concerning clarity, support and disclosure by the description an examination of said claims in their present form is not possible (see also III.2-III.5).

III.2 With respect to claim 1

The term "molecule" is defined by the result to be achieved. No information about the chemical nature of said molecule is given. Therefore, said claim is not supported by the description, as its scope is broader than justified by the description. Furthermore, claim 1 does not meet the requirements of Article 5 PCT in that the application as filed neither disclose a method to measure the activity of prominin-1 nor the activity itself. Moreover, the activity of prominin-1 does not appear to be known at all.

III.3 With respect to claim 2

- a. The term "a small molecule" used in claim 2 is vague and unclear and leaves the reader in doubt as to the meaning of the technical feature to which it refers, thereby rendering the definition of the subject-matter of said claim unclear (Article 6 PCT).
- b. The terms "an antibody", "an RNA aptamer", "a peptide", "a ribozyme", "anti-sense nucleic acids" and "siRNA" are not supported by the description. No single example of said molecules showing the alleged technical feature, i.e. inhibition of the expression or activity of prominin 1, is given. Therefore, claim 2 does not meet the requirements of Article 5 and 6 PCT.

III.4 With respect to claim 3

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/EP03/01229

Claim 3 relates to subject-matter considered by this Authority to be covered by the provisions of Rule 67.1(iv) PCT. Consequently, no opinion will be formulated with respect to the industrial applicability of the subject-matter of this claim (Article 34(4)(a)(i) PCT).

Moreover, during the regional phase, present claim 3 could be in conflict with Article 53(a) EPC, since present claim 3 encompasses testing the "molecules" in humans.

III.5 With respect to claim 3

The subject-matter of claim 3 does not meet the requirements of Article 6 PCT in that step 3 of the method, which is defined as a method to identify molecules that bind to prominin-1, is not related to identifying a molecule binding to prominin-1. Furthermore, the nucleic acid molecules identified do not bind the prominin-1 molecule, rather they code for proteins, which bind to prominin-1. Therefore, claim 3 is not clear.